

## Completed Pollution Prevention Project Case Study

United States Department of Energy  
Office of Environmental Management  
Fact Sheet

### Washable Contamination Barriers

Los Alamos National Laboratory

#### Original Problem

Plastic sheeting was placed on the floor in radiological-control areas at TA-54 prior to almost all operations to simplify cleanup and prevent contamination from coming into contact with the floor and spreading. The problem was that all of this plastic sheeting was eventually disposed of as low level waste.

#### The Project Solution

A team at TA-54 decided to use launderable tarps for their facility instead of plastic sheeting. The washable tarps can be sent away for cleaning, returned to the site, and reused indefinitely. The decision to use these tarps was based largely on the great past success of using launderable personal protective equipment at the site. Plastic sheeting is a major source of low level waste within LANL, and other groups could benefit from switching to launderable tarps as well.

#### Value of Improvement

Approximately \$10,000 will be saved each year in waste disposal costs. The launderable tarps eliminate the need for plastic sheeting and reduce the generation of low level waste by about 0.5 cubic meters per year. These tarps tear less frequently and last much longer than plastic sheeting. The launderable tarps are waterproof, so the plastic sheeting does not have an advantage in this respect either.

Lifecycle Waste Reduction	
Lifecycle Waste Reduction	0.5 m <sup>3</sup> / year
Commencement Date	2001
Project Useful Life (Years)	Indefinite



#### DOE Monetary Benefits

Total Project Cost	NA
Lifecycle Savings	~\$10,000 per year
Return on Investment	NA

#### Benefits At-A-Glance

- The launderable tarps tear less frequently and last much longer than plastic sheeting.
- Since the launderable tarps are not disposed of as low level waste, TA-54 saves approximately \$10,000 each year in disposal expenses.
- About 0.5 cubic meters of low level waste are no longer generated since switching to launderable tarps.

## **Washable Contamination Barriers**

### **Los Alamos National Laboratory**

Summary Data	
Priority Area:	Waste Minimization Projects
Project Type:	Process Redesign
Total Project Cost:	NA
Lifecycle Savings:	~\$10,000 per year
Implementing Group:	TA-54
Benefiting Group:	TA-54
Useful Life Years:	Indefinite
Return on Investment:	NA
Lifecycle Waste Reduction:	0.5 cubic meters of low level waste per year
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